

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for the Official Action dated July 25, 2005. This request for reconsideration is intended to be fully responsive thereto.

Claims 1-8 have been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-8 have also been amended to specify the inventive features of the present invention. More specifically, claims 1 and 5 have been amended to indicate that the deceleration detecting means detects the negative vehicle acceleration. No new matter has been added. The antecedent basis for this amendment can be found on page 12, lines 9-11, of the specification and Fig. 1 (as illustrated, the vehicle has a single deceleration detector 6, such as G-sensor). Obviously, the single deceleration detector 6 detects the deceleration of the vehicle as whole, not separate wheel decelerations. Furthermore, claims 1 and 5 have been also amended to specify that the driving force separating means changes a four wheel drive system to one of a front wheel drive system and a rear wheel drive system. No new matter has been added. The antecedent basis for this amendment can be found on page 14, lines 8-10, of the specification.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuyama et al (US 5,117,934). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the following comments.

Tsuyama teaches a slip control system for a vehicle such as a traction control system or

an antiskid control system (see col. 1, lines 7-9). As clearly noted by Tsuyama, in the traction control, the slip ratio of the driving wheels of the vehicle is detected, and when the slip ratio exceeds a predetermined threshold value, the engine output power and/or the braking force are controlled (the engine output power is reduced and/or the braking force is increased) so that the slip ratio of the driving wheels converges on a target slip ratio in order to prevent the driving wheels from slipping due to excessively large driving force, for instance, during acceleration, thereby ensuring better acceleration performance (col. 1, lines 19-28). In the antiskid control, the slip ratio of the wheels of the vehicle is detected, and when the slip ratio exceeds a predetermined threshold value, the braking force is controlled (reduced) so that the slip ratio of the driving wheels converges on a target slip ratio in order to prevent the wheels from locking (col. 1, lines 29-34). In fact, Tsuyama uses both terms, clearly disclosing that “a vehicle A is provided with a traction control means as the slip control means.” (col. 6, lines 15-16). Moreover, the slip control system of Tsuyama includes the element UTR which Tsuyama alternately calls a slip control unit and a traction control unit (col. 7, lines 16-21). The UTR of Tsuyama effects the traction control by control of the engine output power in addition to the traction control by the braking control (col. 7, lines 52-54).

In other words, the slip control system of Tsuyama fails to teach the driving force separating means changing a four wheel drive system to one of a front wheel drive system and a rear wheel drive system.

Moreover, contrary to the Examiner’s allegations, the system of Tsuyama fails to disclose a vehicle deceleration detecting means detecting negative vehicle acceleration. In fact, Tsuyama

teaches a wheel acceleration detecting means which calculates the acceleration or deceleration of the wheels 1FL, 1FR, 1RL and 1RR on the basis of the rotational speeds of the respective wheels as detected by the wheel speed sensors 64 to 67.

The examiner then alleges that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at time of the invention, that the slip control system of Tsuyama “is at least fully functionally equivalent of the system claimed”. However, Tsuyama clearly discloses a two-wheel drive vehicle (see Fig. 1), while claim 1 of the present application recites a four wheel drive system. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would not find it obvious to modify the two-wheel drive vehicle of Tsuyama to include the driving force separating means changing a four wheel drive system to one of a front wheel drive system and a rear wheel drive system, as Tsuyama disclose the rear-wheel drive vehicle.

Hence, a rejection of claims 1, 2, 5 and 7 under 35 USC § 103(a) is improper.

Claims 3, 4, 6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuyama as applied to claim 1 and 5 above, and further in view of Suzuki et al (JP 2000111394). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the following comments.

As argued above, the slip control system of Tsuyama fails to teach the driving force separating means changing the four wheel drive system to one of the front wheel drive system and rear wheel drive system. Moreover, Tsuyama fails to teach the vehicle deceleration detecting means detecting negative vehicle acceleration.

Suzuki discloses simply the display device which enhances the indication accuracy of a

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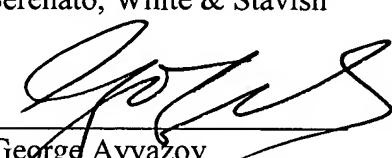
loaded weight value by a method wherein the re-addition of a correction value which can be generated when a timing at which the addition of the correction value after the stop of a vehicle is canceled is used simply as the change width of the output signal of a weight sensor. Clearly, the prior art provides no suggestion or motivation to combine the slip control system of Tsuyama with the weight display device of Suzuki, or how to use the weight data of Suzuki in the slip control system of Tsuyama.

Hence, a rejection of claims 3, 4, 6 and 8 under 35 USC § 103(a) is improper.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-8 define the invention over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe further discussion regarding the above claim language would expedite prosecution they are invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

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